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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

RAMIREZ, DELIA M

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1652

DATE MAILED: 06/23/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/963,668

Applicant(s)

RIEPING ET AL.

Examiner

Delia M. Ramirez

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Application

Claims 1-27 are pending.

It is noted that it is unclear as to whether the strain of claim 27 has a deletion in the *pckA* gene since the claim recites "B3996kur Δ tdhpckA/PVIC40" (i.e. no Δ preceding *pckA*). For restriction purposes, it will be assumed that the strain has been transformed with vector pMAK705 Δ pckA. Clarification of this issue is requested in response to this Office Action if the elected group contains claim 27.

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-7 and 9, partially drawn to a fermentation process for the production of L-amino acids which uses a microorganism from the Enterobacteriaceae family wherein said organism contains a defective *pckA* gene, classified in class 435, subclass 106.
 - II. Claims 8 and 9, partially drawn to a fermentation process for the production of L-amino acids which uses a microorganism from the Enterobacteriaceae family wherein said organism contains a defective *yjfA* and/or *ytfP* gene, classified in class 435, subclass 106.
 - III. Claims 10-11, drawn to a microorganism from the Enterobacteriaceae family wherein said organism contains a defective *pckA* gene, classified in class 435, subclass 252.1.

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- IV. Claims 12-13, drawn to a microorganism from the Enterobacteriaceae family wherein said organism contains a defective yjfa and/or ytfP gene, classified in class 435, subclass 252.1.
- V. Claims 14, 17, 19, 24, 25 and 27, drawn in part to a plasmid containing the polynucleotide of SEQ ID NO: 3, a polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO: 4, a strain comprising the polynucleotide of SEQ ID NO: 4, and an E. coli strain transformed with said plasmid, classified in class 435, subclass 320.1.
- VI. Claims 15, 16, 18, 20-21, 24 and 26, drawn in part to plasmids containing the polynucleotides of SEQ ID NO: 6 or 7, a polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO: 6, a strain comprising the polynucleotides of SEQ ID NO: 6 or 7, and an E. coli strain transformed with said plasmids, classified in class 435, subclass 320.1.
- VII. Claims 22-24, drawn in part to an L-threonine-producing strain from the Enterobacteriaceae family wherein said strain contains a deletion mutation corresponding to SEQ ID NO: 4, 6 or 7, classified in class 435, subclass 252.3.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

- 2. Inventions I and III, V or VII are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP § 806.05(h)). In the instant case the method of Invention I can be practiced with the organisms of Inventions III, V or VII.

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3. Inventions II and IV, VI or VII are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP § 806.05(h)). In the instant case the method of Invention II can be practiced with the organisms of Inventions IV, VI or VII.

4. Inventions I and II are unrelated. Inventions are unrelated if it can be shown that they are not disclosed as capable of use together and they have different modes of operation, different functions, or different effects (MPEP § 806.04, MPEP § 808.01). In the instant case the methods of Inventions II while producing L-amino acids, comprise different steps and do not require the same products.

5. Groups III-VII each comprise a chemically unrelated structure capable of separate manufacture, use, and effect. The DNA in Groups V-VI comprises a nucleic acid sequence, whereas the organisms in Groups III, IV and VII are unrelated since they do not require the same defective genes and/or comprise the same polynucleotides. In addition, the DNA in Groups V-VI can have other uses besides the transformation of the organisms in Groups III, IV and VII, such as in hybridization probes or in gene therapy.

6. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

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7. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement can be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).
8. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a petition under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).
9. Applicants are requested to submit a clean copy of the pending claims (including amendments, if any) in future written communications to aid in the examination of this application.
10. Certain papers related to this application may be submitted to Art Unit 1652 by facsimile transmission. The FAX number is (703) 308-4556. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notices published in the Official Gazette, 1156 OG 61 (November 16, 1993) and 1157 OG 94 (December 28, 1993) (see 37 CFR 1.6(d)). NOTE: If Applicant submits a paper by FAX, the original copy should be retained by Applicant or Applicant's representative. NO DUPLICATE COPIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED, so as to avoid the processing of duplicate papers in the Office.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Delia M. Ramirez whose telephone number is (703) 306-0288. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dr. Ponnathapura Achutamurthy can be reached on (703) 308-3804. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0196.

Delia M. Ramirez, Ph.D.
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 1652

DR
June 11, 2003


PONNATHAPU ACHUTAMURTHY
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